COMPUTERS/HILLEL SEGAL

New package tracks daily to-do list

Can an overpriced program that uses a $2,000 computer help you make daily to-do lists? You may wish to reserve judgment until you've read this article. The $59.95 "Manager" program actually is very useful if you sit in front of a computer all day long. It's also the perfect gift for a manager who might have run out of yellow ruled pads.

Despite what your common sense or logic may tell you, there seems to be a distinct relationship between writing down your goals and actually achieving them, even if you don't consciously work toward the goals.

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Studies of managers who wrote down their goals on Jan. 1 and then put aside the list and did not look at it until Dec. 31, have shown that many of the goals were reached! The mere act of writing down the goals helped to set them in motion.

Taken a few steps further, every time-management course instructs you to review your goals every day and make a fresh to-do list every morning. The experts argue that if it's possible to reach many goals even if they are not reviewed all year, imagine how much you could accomplish if your goals are constantly reviewed, and you set up your tasks every day to make them happen.

Well, that's the concept behind the Manager program. Like an on-line Day Timer, it resides all the time in your computer's memory, and allows you to call up and edit your list of goals, and revise your priorities, at any time — even when you're in the middle of another program.

And that's not all. There are several other features built in:

✔ Appointment calendar. Helps you list all your appointments and then beeps at the appropriate time to remind you to go to each one.

✔ Personnel records..Helps you keep track of each staff member's date of hire, salary and performance review.

✔ Action file. Helps you keep track of subordinates' goals and tasks; records your positive and negative feedback to each one.

✔ Inspirational messages. At predefined intervals during the day, you're treated to wonderful messages that pop up on the screen. "Always remember that when you are kicked from the rear, it means you're in front ... Fulton J. Sheen."

✔ Previously called PC Manager, the program was introduced earlier this year and originally sold for $99. As it turned out, a lot of people were confused by the name, thinking that it was for keeping track of PC hardware and software. In fact, that's what I originally thought too, and it was a pleasant surprise to discover that it was actually a more general-purpose time-management tool. It's new name, Manager, and lower price, $59.95, ease some of the confusion and make it a better buy.

The program, from Sterling Castle Software of Marina del Rey, Calif., is still expensive, however, compared with non-computerized time-management alternatives. And it has a major disadvantage: your computer must be handy at all times. For many managers, reviewing goals and to-do lists is an minute-to-minute activity that takes place in cars, planes, other people's offices and even at home.

But for managers who are not bothered by this limitation, it's handy, helpful and even entertaining. For them, it will be well worth $59.95.

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